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INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3355

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 007359

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TAGS: PGOV PHUM PREL KDEM TH

SUBJECT: THAKSIN ON LINE ONE

Classified By: Ambassador Ralph L. Boyce, reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra called the Ambassador on December 8 from Beijing. After initial pleasantries, he asked about the upcoming visit of former President Bush to Bangkok. The Ambassador replied that the former president was coming to honor the King's 60th anniversary on the throne. Thaksin recalled that this visit in the King's honor was one of his initiatives while he was in office. He asked whether the former president would call on Prime Minister Surayud. The Ambassador explained that we expected Surayud to attend the dinner, but there would be no separate call on him.

¶2. (SBU) Thaksin remarked on the US efforts to promote a return to democracy in Thailand. He said that he welcomed this, not for his own sake, but because it was "good for the country." Thaksin told the Ambassador that he would soon be leaving Beijing to travel to southern China. After a few more pleasantries, he wished the Ambassador a happy new year, and rang off.

¶3. (C) Comment: Thaksin sounded relaxed and happy. He has called only one other time since the coup (to thank us for assistance when he got his tourist visa). We presume that he mostly wanted to follow up on news reports of the Bush visit (which was, in fact, a Thaksin initiative.) Although it may be known that the former president's delegation is proceeding to Beijing from here, Thaksin did not suggest a meeting in China or request to pass along any message. Thaksin's extended vacation in China -- so close to Thailand -- heightens the interim government's anxiety level, which may explain why he's planning to stay there for a while longer.
End comment.

BOYCE